Merseyside UFO Bulletin 4:2

Edited by John Harney and John A Rimmer

June 1971

LORENZEN OR CONDON?

YOU PAYS YOUR MONEY AND YOU TAKES YOUR CHOICE

NESSED THE CATASTROPHE.

ON THE BASIS OF THIS EVIDENCE IT IS
HIGHLY PROBABLE THE METALLIC CHUNKS
PICKED UP ON THE BEACH NEAR UBATUBA
IN SAO PAULO, BRAZIL, ARE EXTRA—
TERRESTRIAL IN ORIGIN. THIS IS IN—
DEED AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AND
ALMOST INCREDIBLE CONCLUSION. BUT
ON THE BASIS OF THE FINDINGS OP
THESE CHEMICAL ANALYSES THERE IS NO
OTHER ALTERNATIVE. AS STAGGERING AS
THE IMPLICATIONS MAY BE, THIS AP—
PEARS TO BE THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE
EXPLANATION. THEREFORE THE MAGNESIUM
SAMPLES ANALYSED MUST REPRESENT
"PHYSICAL EVIDENCE" OF THE REALITY
AND EXTRATERESTRIAL ORIGIN OF A
UFO DESTROYED IN AN EXPLOSION OVER
THE UBATUBA REGION. THEY ARE, IN
FACT, "FRAGMENTS" OF AN EXTRATERR—
ESTRIAL VEHICLE WHICH MET WITH DIS—
ASTER IN THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, AS
REPORTED BY HUMAN BEINGS WHO WIT—
NESSED THE CRAISTROPHE.

ACHECK OF DOW METALLURGICAL LAB—
ORATORY RECORDS REVEALED THAT, OVER
THE YEARS THIS LABORATORY MADE EX—
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THE UBATUBA AMALYSED MUST REPRESENT
TECHNOLOGY KNOWN PRIOR TO 1957, THE
EXISTENCE AND COMPOSITION OF THESE
SAMPLES THEMSELVES REVEAL NO INFORMATION ABOUT THE SAMPLES' ORIGINS.
THE CLAIM OF UNUSUAL PURITY OF THE
MANNESIUM FRAGMENTS DO NOT SHOW
MANNESIUM FRAGMENTS DO NOT SHOW
THEREFORE THEY CANNOT BE USED AS
UNIQUE OR UNEARTHLY COMPOSITION; AND
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UNIQUE OR UNEARTHLY COMPOSITION; AND
THEREFORE THEY CANNOT BE USED AS
UNIQUE OR UNEARTHLY COMPOSITION; AND NESSED THE CATASTROPHE.

THE GRATIFYING ASPECT OF THIS CASE
HOWEVER, IS THAT WE DO NOT HAVE TO
DEPEND ON THE TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES
TO ESTABLISH THE REALITY OF THE
INCIDENT, FOR THE MOST ADVANCED
LABORATORY TESTS INDICATE THE FRACMENTS RECOVERED COULD NOT HAVE BEEN
PRODUCED THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF
ANY KNOWN TERRESTRIAL TECHNIQUES.

VALID EVIDENCE OF THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL ORIGIN OF A VEHICLE OF WHICH
THEY ARE CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN A
PART. THIS PROJECT HAS FOUND NO
CLEARLY INDICATED THE EXISTENCE IN
THE ATMOSPHERE OF VEHICLES OF EXTRAORDINARY NATURE. BELIEF IN THE
EXISTENCE OF SUCH VEHICLES, IF SUCH
ARCUMENTS. VALID EVIDENCE OF THE EXTRATERREST-ARGUMENTS.

UBATUBA

EDITORIAL

The End of the Rainbow

According to folklore there is a crock of gold buried at the end of the rainbow. But chase the rainbow and it will always retreat. The position of the rainbow depends upon the position of the observer. Observers in different places see it in different positions, or not at all. It is, nevertheless, a real phenomenon which can be explained by the laws of physics. The flying saucer is even more elusive and no single explanation appears to fit the observations of it.

Most UFOs can be explained as misinterpretations of natural or man-made phenomena. The remainder appear to defy ratmonal analysis. "Serious" ufologists concern themselves with such puzzling cases. They thus hope to unearth the "fairy gold" which, in their belief, is proof positive that the UFOs are extraterrestrial spacecraft. But they will not succeed because, like the rainbow, the UFO phenomenon is governed by natural laws--laws which ensure that the quicker they approach it the quicker it will retreat from them.

Only if they discover the nature of these laws will they make any progress towards a solution to the mystery and, judging from the UFO literature to date, most of them are a long way from doing so.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From Mr JOHN A. KEEL

Dear John,

I have just received the Nov. and Dec. Bulletins. I was beginning to fear that sinister government agents might have confiscated your typewriter and carried you off in the middle of the night to the R.A.F.'s supersecret prison/madhouse for dangerous UFO researchers. Glad you are still in operation and that postal service has resumed.

The British edition of OPERATION TROJAN HORSE is scheduled to be released on April 29th by Souvenir Press of London. I would greatly appreciate receiving any clippings of any reviews or comments that might appear in the British press. Frankly I doubt if it will be widely reviewed but one never knows.

Alan Sharp's comments in your November issue delighted me. His letter outlines all that has been wrong with ufology to date...the totally pragnatic approach (on the part of the scientifically trained element), and the tendency to denigrate opposite opinions and those who form them. Obviously anyone who does not believe what "I" believe (he says in effect) must be a crackpot. Since my views are so divergent from his, this makes me "King of the UFO crackpots" (a phrase coined by Hynek's partner, William T. Powers, incidentally). Mr Sharp is profoundly sane, of course, although I have yet to meet a truly sane astronomer. Indeed, the two most insane areas of science are astronomy and archaeology and the classic characterisation of the "crazy, absent-minded professor" is solidly based in fact. However, it is equally well-known that writers are the strangest, most eccentric breed of all. We are, undoubtedly, even more weird than the crackpot professors. A number of the latter group have been loudly advocating extraterrestrial visitations for several years. Their evidence thus far has been on the same level as the evidence being used by the stalwarts of the Flat Earth Society.

I must take umbrage with Sharp's remarks about the value of "studying the movement of galaxies by watching a glamorous woman downing a Scotch-on-the-rocks". I have, in fact, learned a great deal over the years by doing just that. The more Scotch consumed, the more I learned. It is one scientific method I heartily endorse.

Perhaps Mr Sharp misunderstands my entire thesis. I have stressed that the initial investigation must be a study of the witnesses and must be conducted by psychiatrists and psychologists. As he put it, "the universe of mystery incomprehensible in its complexity" is almost entirely the product of

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"the inhabitants of mental institutions". Many of our American UFO witnesses, contactees, and <u>researchers</u> have ended up in mental institutions. The very basic premise of ufology is totally insane! The ideas and theories propounded by the UFO believers are insane by almost any standard. The strange urge to promote these insane ideas publicly, often at great personal expense, ridicule, etc., has been detrimental to any public acceptance of the phenomenon. Such efforts are evangelistic, not scientific. And the people who advocate irrational, unsubstantiated ideas should be medically examined. Since 1965, Dr Hynek himself has stressed the examination of witnesses and has often complained that no UFO case has ever been given the "FBI treatment" (i.e., a thorough study of all aspects). In my investigations I have attempted to apply this treatment within my admitted limitations.

In my two books I carefully outlined my methods, my findings, and my conclusions. I suggested numerous ways in which my "discoveries" could be tested in the field by intelligent investigators. The results of my efforts have been interesting...and psychologically curious. A polarisation has taken place on the American UFC scene. Those who have been directly involved in UFO investigations and bizarre events and yet managed to retain an open mind have quietly swung over to my side (if I have a side). They know what I'M talking about. Unfortunately, many of these 'New Ufologists" have chosen to discontinue their publications, terminate their membership in the various UFO organizations, and more or less withdraw from the UFO mainstream. Apparently, acceptance of Keelism (another choice Hynek phrase) destroys interest in evangelism. The result is that the hardcore types who remain are virulently anti-Keel. I dismiss their beliefs so I am an "enemy". Most of the UFO publications that have survived are therefore antagonistic to the "New Ufology". They go on censoring and distorting the items that come their way, and continue to advocate the old causes and beliefs...nost of which are based on the peculiar logic denounced by Sharp. The philosophy of the mischievous elementals who have been playing silly games with the human race since Ogg crawled out of a cave.

Some time ago a West Coast UFO publication carried an absurd, even slanderous, quasi-review of OPERATION TROJAN HORSE. Jerome Clark wrote to the journal in protest. He was duly informed that I was "banned" from its august pages and, even if I wanted to bother, would not be permitted to reply to the perverse charges levelled against me. Other American publications have employed such tired tactics as quoting me out of context. One took a direct quote from Howard Menger in my book and credited it to me as "proof" of something or other. Another sad fact is that the extreme right wing groups (ultra-conservatives, politically) have infiltrated ufology here and are lending their own sick paranoid notions to the already disoriented U.S. UFO scene. Right wing smear tactics (quoting out of context, attacking through innuendo, etc.) are becoming the norm in American UFO publications. Recently NICAP's illustrious bulletin made some iname crack about my writing for "girlie magazines", when, of course, I avoid such magazines. My main field has always been the men's adventure magazines. Which are quite separate and distinct from the "girlie" field. NICAP doesn't know the difference, I suppose. Should they stumble upon one of my pieces in the New York Times Sunday Magazine they would undoubtedly condemn me because that same publication is usually filled with advertisements of winsome ladies posing in their underwear.

The trend, unfortunately, is for the "New Ufologists" to stop beating the drum and drop out of sight, loaving the field to the steadily shrinking but loud-mouthed fanatics and fringe types. I would hate to see this sad pattern repeated in Great Britain. History demonstrates that believers and fanatics shoot people, start wars, and generate all kinds of useless conroversies and conflicts. Ufology has been following the patterns of the religious groups, on a much smaller level, of course. You don't need a background in sociology to discern this.

Alan Sharp, and many others, have responded emotionally to my findings and conjectures. They have failed to recognize the main thrust of my work—a return to total objectivity and open mindedness; consideration of all theories and intelligent investigation and testing of each and every one.

Here in the U.S. there are some large, well-organized groups who are loudly battling our government's Merial Health programes. I have interviewed and written about some of the leaders of table groups. It is clear that they really fear that such programes will be directed at them because, deep down, they know they are crazy. When the Condon Committee first swung into action they called Ray Palmer and other hardcore ufologists and generated considerable outcry because, logically enough, a large part of the committee consisted of psychologists and they were asking psychological questions. The ufologists

instinctively feared that Condon was out to prove they were crazy. Most of ufology adopted this same stance, and most ufologists frothed at the mouth when psychiatry was even mentioned. Why? My guess is for the same reason that anti-Mental Health groups are battling efforts to enlarge and improve our mental institutions and psychiatric techniques. If careful studies should prove that contactees, witnesses to landings, etc. were hallucinating or suffering from mental aberrations akin to the religious ecstasies, then the believers can only scream "Whitewash", "Fraud" or whatever, because all their beliefs are based entirely on blind acceptance of the reality of such experiences.

If ufology can ever be set upon the right track (and FSR is trying hard to lead the way), we stand to learn amazing things about the human condition generally, about psychology, religion, the myth-making mechanism of the human mind, and reality itself. Along the way we will certainly abandon, one by one, all of the concepts and beliefs which have been popular these past 23 years. By 1980, ufology may be dead. That is, ufology as we now know it. But it will hopefully be replaced by a new, more rational science that studies everything, considers everything, and does not attempt to support any particular belief. Recently Dr Frank Drake, our famous radioastronomer, stated that discoveries in the last five years have forced astronomy to discard many of its most beloved theories and truths. All asgronomical textbooks will have to be completely rewritten in the next thirty years. We are making a grand discovery. The grandest of all. We are learning just how ignorant we really are. Ufology is but another road leading us to the same discovery. Once we recognise our sublime ignorance we can stop searching for answers and try, instead, to frame the proper questions.

The U.S. and Soviet moon shots taught us one horrible fact. After peering at the moon for hundreds of years we really didn't know a damed thing about it. And most of what we thought we knew has been proven erroneous overnight. Man's ego really can't take this kind of punishment. And the ufological ego is the largest of all. It is easier to deny new facts than to refashion old acceptances. The American ufologists don't like what I have to say so they have banned me from some of their periodicals. One American group even tried to get Bowen to ban me from FSR. These are the same people who have been wailing for two decades about alleged government censorship of UFOs, official conspiracies, etc.

Now I must get back to work and write a crackpot article for a "girlie" magazine. All the best ... John A. Keel, Box 351, Murray Hill Station, New York, New York 10016, U.S.A.

From Mr JACQUES BONABOT, Director of Groupement pour l'Etude des Sciences d'Avant-Garde

Dear Friend.

I was sincerely glad to read the last two issues of MUFOB, especially the December 1970 one. Knowing MUFCB from the April 1966 issue, GESAB has always exchanged publications with you. And today we see (myself especially) that you have made great steps in UFO investigation and, perhaps, the approach to the truth.

I specially appreciated "An Open Letter to Alan Sharp", in the December issue of MUFOB (page 63), because this is perhaps one of the most relevant comments which has been made on the New Ufology. So, I can also conclude after reading John Rimmer's letter that he has a good approach to the subject. But here are more details about what I mean.

I quote: "I personally suspect that such a framework may be forthcoming from the sciences of the mind and the subconscious. If this is so it is nonsense to say that we 'shall be left studying the people and not the UFOs', for in effect the people will be the UFOs, or rather the UFO phenomena. (Once again I am the prisoner of an inadequately developed vocabulary.)"

Actually I know of only one other person who said the same thing (a big thing if you pay a little attention to the words!) and he is the well-known French researcher, Aime Michel. He wrote: (1)

"Seulement pour demontrer cette proposition il me faudrait faire appel a un laborieux appareil relevant de techniques que les ufologistes n'ont pas encore l'habitude d'utiliser, et plus precisement de l'ethologie de la psychologie comparee, de la physiologie du cerveau et de l'epistemologie.." In English this means:

"But to demonstrate this proposition I must use a difficult set of techniques, which ufologists are not accustomed to employing, namely ethnology, comparative psychology, the physiology of the brain and epistemology."

Michel's lines give the "inadequately developed vocabulary" of John

Ricmer's letter.

Ethnology deals with culture, customs and social relationships. Comparative psychology compares the behaviour of animals and men, and brain physiology compares healthy men with sick men, when dealing with the activities of the brain. Epistemology deals with the nature and validity of knowledge, with criticism of scientific thought.

So you will see many new aspects of this new approach. It is a fact, here in GESAG, that we haven't written much about such new ufology in our last issues. The main (and only) reason why is (a) this needs careful research for good documentation and knowledge and (b) researchers who are able to work in this field (people who don't necessarily deal with UTO research...this is of first importance.

Is it a coincidence when we can find in the same MUFOB issue of December 1970 the study of "The UFO is Alive and Well and Living in Fairyland"! (again by Mr Rimmer) As Mr Rimmer wrote: "The other book (by Lady Augusta

Gregory) at first sight appears to have nothing to do with UFOs".

But if this is (in the book content) ETHNOLOGY from Ireland we are of course not dealing with UFOs and so it is not necessary to use an EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL HYPOTHESIS as first base in... UFOLOGY. The original fault of all UFOLOGY has been to link it with possible beings from other worlds, probes of spacecraft from outside our solar system. But we have an excuse: we began during the rocket's first steps and the coming of the space era.

On the other hand this approach between UFO-ETH-Space Era will perhaps have the same origin in COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGY and certainly in brain physiology. To quote Mr Rimmer in the same way: "...from the science of the

mind and the SUDCONSCIOUS.." Do you see the way now?

As conclusion we can add here that the book Passport to Magonia has its value today. The list of a century of landings which is printed in this book shows us also the pattern of all sightings.

The witness during his work (or travelling)

The meeting with the "craft" -the reaction, beings-men

men-beings.

Reaction which occurred and is occurring always today in every country of our planet: With respect to ethnology, the psychology of the population - this is a great study in Which we concern ourselves! And perhaps to end With this: criticism of our own science will be of good value - especially in the optics of UFOs - Condon and Co: this is epistemology!

With my best regards and wishes for a valuable evolution in your

approach. Jacques Bonabot. 17 Rosendael, Bruges, Belgium.

From Mr GARY R. LESLEY

Dear Mr Harney,

It is out of sheer admiration that I write this letter. The Bulletin deserves better than what it got from the pen of the conservative Mr Gardner (Spring 71 NUFOB). It tickles the hell out of me to read the "father-to-son" letter. Mr Cardner calls your staff "angry young men" as he proceeds to get angry himself over the laberalistic treatment the UFO gets in your publication. Can we tolerate the Mr Gardners of the world any longer? I'm sure we will have to, of course, buttthey do seem pitifully out of it all.

Sure, the Bulletin is a bit nasty, but aren't we all? That satirical Mr Rimmer of yours is a lot of fun, and we desparately need more humour in this grim, tiresome field. One sometimes gets the distinct impression from browsing through the pages of many UFO zires, that we are all a bunch of robots spouting out repetitious material. It's refreshing to have a break from all that. Mr

Rimmer provides i.t.

Within a few mouths, I'll try my head at publishing a UFO zine to be called Observations. For two years I cranked out the UAPRO Bulletin which unfortunately furthand the notion that we are under ET observation. Within the past 12 months I've (hopefully) grown up to realize that the main mass of circumstantial evidence refutes the ETH.

Before I close, I'd like to mention that I read Mr Sharp's silly

letter (Nov. 70 MUFOB) and wholeheartedly agree with John Rimmer. The man obviously feels abandoned, and his ideas are on a sinking galleon. Oh, one more thing, Charlie Bowen called your publication "lively" in the Dec. 70 FSR - a most appropriate description to say the least!

Sincerely yours, Gary R. Lesley, 717 "A" Street N.E., Auburn, Washington 93002, U.S.A.

From Mr NORMAN OLIVER, Director of CUS-MOS

Dear John,

Perhaps you will be good enough to allow me space for a few further comments on Peter Rogerson's letters. I was not offended by Peter's impression I was favourable to John Keel's ideas. I was offended by his original statement that COS_MOS had 'fallen under the influence of unsavoury cultists'. He is quite right in his assumption I would disagree with his belief that all occultism and 90% of spiritualism is 'unsavoury cultism'. This really is a 'blanket' statement, and I must admit to being intrigued about that remaining 10% of spiritualism!

The COS-MOS Journal and the COS-MOS meetings are designed to cover as full a spectrum as possible of ufological viewpoints and ideas. Whether Peter Rogerson likes it or not, SOME of these viewpoints fall under his definition of cultism. At neither of the meetings referred to were the speakers cultists in my book, and even had they been, I see no reason why such views should not be heard. one speaker might even be right! It never ceases to astound me that in Ufology people can be so intolerant of one anothers' viewpoints. I'm told I must admit the talks referred to were 'not likely to inspire confidence'. They were not intended to inspire anybody, merely to enable different ideas and alleged experiences to be presented. Peter obviously does not know me very well, or he would realise that no-one 'influences' me - least of all 'cranks' and Peter Rogerson. I invite to speak at our meetings and to write in our journal, those I believe to have something useful to contribute, or a viewpoint worthy of consideration; not unnaturally, as our aims are of a contact nature, articles and talks are by no means all of the inuts and bolts' variety. They are diverse, which is, in my opinion, as it should be - but perhaps that labels me as an 'unsavoury cultist'. (How come, by the way, that John Keel apparently escapes this heading?)

Despite the above, my thanks to Peter for his retraction insofar as the COS-MOS committee and myself are concerned, and if he has any trouble with the further 'crocodile tears', I'll be only too pleased to send up a packet of paper handkerchiefs to enabla him to cope!

Best wishes to yourself and the Merseyside UFO Bulletin, Yours sincerely, Norman Oliver, 95 Taunton Road, Lee, London, S.E. 12.

From Mr PETER BOOTH

Dear John,

Like your American correspondents, the photographs on Vol.2, No.4's cover attracted me more deeply into your activities. Frankly, I originally thought the photos were faked, but if Alan Sharp's drink is Guinness I see little point in wasting Ferry Hennell's time - it is the UFO photo of 1969.

Seriously though, I'm sure you'll be interested in the attached photocopies of correspondence from <u>Nature</u>; especially the letter from P.C.W.Davies from Cambridge. We only need a few more letters like this and Patrick Moore and Sir Bernard will refuse to answer all UFO questions.

Best wishes, Peter Booth, 11 Sandleigh Avenue, Cheadle, Cheshire,

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TROJAN HORFE -- An exhaustive study of OPERATION

unidentified flying objects - revealing their source and the forces that control

J O H N Α. KEEL them $\mathbb{B}\mathbf{y}$

British edition now on sale. Published by Souvenir Press, London. Price £2.

(See "Notes Quotes and Queries" for discussion of correspondence referred to in Peter Booth's letter.)

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THE SAUCER LECTURER

by Allen H. Greenfield

Pretending to place my notes back on the speaker's table, I was able to steal a look out at the audience. About 50 or 60 persons were already there; the scheduled time for the lecture was 8 p.m. and it was only about 7.50 now.

Actually, I didn't really expect much more than this — the saucer business, thank Rouwb, isn't what it once was. In any case, the hall we had rented had a huge seating capacity, so that even a rather large turn-out would appear small. This was to make those who did attend feel uncomfortable and part of a lost cause. It was who did attend feel uncomfortable and part of a lost cause. It was a small part of the Plan.

I could see at the centre of the room, on the right side from where I stood, Welooh was just taking his seat. He had come this time dressed as a hippie, and he looked the part very well

indeed.

Of course, we wouldn't want our people to develop too much of a hippie image, because that might shift the straights right back into the saucer movement, and we wanted anything but that. But Welooh had a very small part tonight — all he had to do was to stand up at the right moment and yell "Fake!" after Raong made his pitch,

But where the hell was Raong? Momentarily, I dropped my paper-sorting ruse, and overtly looked wildly around the room. It was a relief when I realized abruptly that this time he had even fooled me, if only for a moment. There he was, dressed in his scientific suit as we called it. But this time, he had added a small, neatly-trimmed beard, which had come as a surprise to me. One of his own little ideas.

Checking my watch, I could see that it was exactly 8. I

gave Reen the signal to begin and he walked over to the speaker's table and began his bit with the p.a. As usual, we had fixed it in such a way so that it would work badly all evening. "One," he began, "testing one - two - three. Test. Testing..." As he went through this I made a last minute check of the slide projector. Perfect.

Four slides were in upside down, and the bulb was all set to burn out right in the middle of the slide lecture. Everything was in order, I was sure, and Reen, having finished his messing

with the mike, began the programme.

"Good evening," he offered. His voice was accompanied by an irritating squeal from the public address system, just as we had hoped. "Welcome to the Atlantic Coast Flying Object Convention. We are so glad to see so many of you flying saucer fans here today, and we hope that you will enjoy our programme.

"Now, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our special guest lecturer, ar expert on the flying saucer subject who also has lectured on such important topics as e.s.p. and astrology, Mr

Fieldson H. Henry!"

Clap, clap, clap. The unimpressive sound of applause from the small crowd was absolute music to my ears. I walked slowly to the table, making sure to trip over the mike cable slightly, pushed my glasses slightly off to the side to enhance the crackpot image I was to project, and began.

I started out conservatively enough, discussing the Arnold incident, the Washington sightings of 1952, the Gill case, Socorro, Michigan, etc. Then I touched on the contactees, keeping it all objective and impersonal. I began the slide lecture, and showed due distress when the projector bulb blew out, have went through the motions of searching the hall for an extra bulb, though of course we didn't have one.

(One night last year, while doing this bit, some damned idiot in the audience actually had a bulb with him. We had to make do with the inverted slides and the fake-looking photographs to

salvage the slide part of the programme.)

Anyway, after about 15 minutes of this, during which the audience began to fidget pleasingly around in their very uncomfortable chairs, I amounced that we would take a short break and then

resume the lecture.

Now, the break, you see, is designed to show us how well we are doing on a given evening. If we are doing quite well, about half the people in the audience will not be back. On a poor evening, only one or two leave. One time we were lucky enough to find an unheated hall in the dead of winter, which also had the additional asset of no restrooms. Only about five persons stayed that time, all, presumably, with heavy coats and fantastic control of bodily functions. And this was back in 1967, when saucer lecturers, even bad ones, were really packing them in. It was some meeting.

After the break this time, I noted we had lost 10 or 15. O.K., but hardly something to rave about. I gave Reen a signal and he

but hardly something to rave about. I gave Reen a signal, and he changed the setting on the p.a. so that it would squeal at a slightly more irritating level. I then went on.

"I regret that the slide showing will not be able to go on, but as announced in the newspapers, we are going to have a questionand-answer session. If you have, ah, a question for us?"

Several hands. I picked a fat man in an oversized trench

coat. He asked: "Where do the UFOs come from?"

I hedged, still playing it conservative. Then, after a few more such, I recognized Raong. He stood there, tall and impressive, and in that deep tone of voice of his asked, "Isn't it true that you yourself claim contact with the aliens?"

My face, as always, turned an embarrassed red. I went through my evasion act, then told the contact story, filled with contradictions even the tennis shoe crowd could notice. On cue, Welooh jumped up, yelled "Fake!" and stalked out of the hall. A couple of people followed him. The rest counted dots on the ceiling, looked at their watches, etc. until the end of the lecture.

Back at the ship, flying on to our next lecture date, Raong asked, for the thousandth time, "Why? Why do they buy such a simple ruse?"

"Perhaps," I said, "because they need to believe it is a fake. If they didn't, well, remember the Orwell broadcast." Off we flew, looking for all the world like a flying saucer, or was it just ball lightning?

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THE SEARCH FOR PHYSICAL EVIDENCE - Part Three

by John Harney

The Ubatuba Magnesium

Take a fragment of metal, preferably a not-too-common sample, and launch it onto the UFO world, accompanied by a story alleging that it is a piece of a flying saucer. Then sit back and await results. Either it will merely provide, for a short while, material to bolster the fantasies of some of the more credulous ufologists or with a bit of luck it will attract more continued. ufologists or, with a bit of luck, it will attract more serious attention.

Without doubt the weightiest and most prolonged controversy concerning alleged flying saucer fragments began in Rio de Janeiro,

Brazil, in 1957.

Briefly - as the story has been told at length elsewhere -(1) the evidence came to light when a Rio society columnist, Ibrahim Sued, reported in the newspaper O Globo that he had received a mysterious letter. The unnamed correspondent wrote that he and some friends saw a flying saucer which exploded in flames over a beach near Ubatuba, Sao Paulo. It disintegrated into thousands of fiery fragments, which fell into the sea. Some fell close to the shore and were collected by the witnesses. Some of these fragments were sent to Sued with the letter. This story attracted the attention of the renowned UFO researcher, the late Dr Olavo T. Fontes.

Fontes obtained these samples and submitted them to the Mineral Production Laboratory, a department of the Brazilian

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Agriculture Ministry. The material was given a spectrographic analysis and the report merely indicated that this showed "the presence of magnesium (Mg) of a high degree of purity and absence of any other metallic element." Dr Fontes was not satisfied with this report and attempted to obtain a more detailed analysis. A second spectrographic test confirmed the first result. Other samples were later analysed using more refined techniques. Eventually, after studying the reports of the analyses and relevant technical data on the industrial methods used in refining magnesium, Fontes came to the conclusion that the magnesium was of a higher degree of purity than could be obtained by any refining processes known at that time. In his report, published by Coral Lorenzen, he went on to speculate about flying saucers made of magnesium.

The argument used by Fontes and repeated by other supporters of the ETH was that as the magnesium was purer than any that could be manufactured on earth, it must have been produced by a superior

civilization on some other planet.

The Colorado Project members, in their search for physical evidence which might tend to support the ETH, obtained samples of the Ubatuba magnesium fragments and had them analysed by the National Office Laboratory, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax Division, Bureau of Internal Revenue. The method chosen was that known as neutron-activation analysis. For comparison, a sample of triply sublimed magnesium was acquired from the Dow Chemical Company. This sample was similar to samples which that company had supplied on

request for at least 25 years.

Both samples were found to contain very small proportions of impurities, but the pattern of impurities in each sample was rather different. The Ubatuba magnesium contained about 500 parts per million of zinc, as against 5 in the Dow sample, and 500 p.p.m. of strontium, which was not detected in the Dow sample. However, according to the Condon Report, a check was made of Dow Metall-urgical Laboratory records and revealed that the company had made experimental batches of magnesium containing various proportions of strontium. As early as 1940 it had produced a 700 gm batch of magnesium containing nominally the same concentration of strontium as was contained in the Ubatuba sample. The Project's conclusion was that there was nothing unique or unearthly in the composition of the Ubatuba fragments and there was thus no reason to suppose that they were of extraterrestrial origin. (2)

One scientist who disagreed with the Project's findings was Dr David R. Saunders, who was sacked from the Project by Dr Condon for "incompetence", in the wake of the famous "Low memo" affair. Saunders devoted a chapter to the Ubatuba samples in his book about the Condon Committee. (3) In this he argues that the significance of the Ubatuba magnesium lies in the impurities which

it does not contain. Saunders wrote:

If the fragment were untrapure terrestrial magnesium one would expect to find one of four conditions existing.

However, a sample containing 500 p.p.m. each of zinc and strontium can hardly be described as "ultrapure" when compared with the Dow sample, which contained no more than 5 p.p.m. of any of the S impurities listed in the table comparing the samples in the Condon Report. Saunders does not mention the Dow sample. Saunders went on:

-- If the sample were a terrestrial alloy of magnesium, it might have contained aluminium or copper or both. There was no aluminium and only a trace of copper.

According to the Condon Report, no aluminium was detected in the Dow sample either and this sample contained only 0.4 p.p.m. of copper, as against 3.3 in the Ubababa magnesium.

-- St someone had made a serious effort to purify the sample, the element most difficult to remove would have been calcium. There was none.

-If someone had done an unusually fine job of removing

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the calcium, he would almost certainly have done it using a quartz vessel. This would have introduced minute amounts of silicon into the sample. The FBI tests showed that no silicon was present.

Calcium and silicon are not mentioned in the Condon Report account of the analysis.

> -- If someone had used the best techniques available to purify magnesium in 1968, he would have employed repeated sublimation of the metal under a very high vacuum. A mercury vapour pump would be required to produce this vacuum, resulting in mercury contamination of the product. There was no mercury in the Ubatuba sample.

According to the Condon Report, no mercury was detected in the Ubatuba magnesium, but 2.6 p.p.m. was detected in the Dow sample. Roy Craig, the author of this section of the Condon Report, makes no comment about the absence of mercury from the

Ubatuba sample, so presumably he and his advisors did not consider this to be of any great significance.

Saunders deduces from his arguments, particularly the one about the absence of mercury, that the sample "can be said to be 100.0 percent pure, because there is nothing in it by accident." However, apart from the absence of aluminium and mercury, the Ubatuba sample has greater proportions of each of the other six impurities listed in the Condon Report than has the Dow sample.

The layman may perhaps be forgiven for supposing that. as the Ubatuba sample contained no mercury and a different pattern of impurities, and larger amounts of impurities than the Dow sample, then it must have been manufactured by some other chemical

company, by a different process.

Apart from the technical discussions concerning the composition of the magnesium samples, the Ubatuba case has been kept alive over the years by means of unwarranted assumptions as to its origin. For example, the Lorenzens write: (4)

> That the material is not 100 percent pure magnesium does not lessen the impact of the case, for we still have to explain how that magnesium got to a remote beach area at that time. What manner of machine was the shiny disc-shaped object that exploded?

We do not, in fact, have to explain anything of the sort, as there is no convincing evidence that the samples came from a flying disc, or that they were picked up from a beach, at Ubatuba, or anywhere else. The samples first came to light in the office of a Rio society columnist, where they arrived through the post-writer of the letter accompanying the samples and his alleged fellow witnesses to the UFO sighting have never been traced.

The more rational conclusion in this case is, plainly, that the Ubatuba affair was a hoax. It must be regarded as one of the most successful hoaxes in the history of ufology, in view of the time and money spent and the amount of technical expertise

lavished on it.

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THE SUN MAIDEN -- An examination of some mythological traditions, with relevance to contemporary ufology

by Peter Rogerson

Since the publication of Vallee's PASSPORT TO MAGONIA there has been a growing awareness that the UFO phenomenon belongs to a wider context of 'events', that possess a deep mythological significance for the human species.

This myth may be summarised as a belief in a fabulous land inhabited by supernatural beings, who can and do intervene in the affairs of men. They may 'take' men and women to their land, as either mates or servants, or to perform a special task. They may live among men for a time, but are eventually called back to their homeland. They can take an interest in the affairs of individuals, families, or nations, either to aid or to harm. Above all they are powerful:

We could cut off half the human race, but would not... for we are expecting salvation

a member of the gentry tells an Irish seer (1). For this reason they must be held in respect; one should not conduct oneself in an unseemly manner in their presence or in the places sacred to them. A belief which persists to this day:

I favour the idea that the watchers have to be... somehow in tune with whatever controls UFOs before they will appear... preferably a small, harmonious group should sit quietly and think about UFOs

writes Janet Gregory in <u>Pegasus</u> magazine, in a recent discussion on skywatches (2), feeling that the general chit-chat and blaring transistor radios are an affront to the inhabitants of Magonia.

There are many intriguing strands of belief connected with the general myth of Fairyland, as John Rimmer has pointed out. (3) In many respects one of the most important of these myths is that of the divine maid, who can seduce men, and take them to the unknown country, or as in the tales we shall explore in this article can impart to them messages of great import. This maiden is simultaneously a mermaid-nereid figure and a sun goddess. The sun is the origin of the archetype of the Mandala, (The radiance of the sun is seen as a symbol of spiritual wholeness.) with which the UFO is so identified, as is the Grail legend. (4) In this way we can trace a mythological line of profound importance.

In South Uist, in the haunted Western Isles, tradition has it that on Easter Day, from the peak of Ben More the sun can be seen to dance, to celebrate the Resurrection, according to the Christianised version of the legend, which in fact is far older, and must date from the days of sun worship. One Easter day a widow climbed the mountain to see for herself:

She said the sun came above the horizon a dazzling blaze of gold, and when it reached the crest of the great hills... it began to change colour, green it became, then purple and red, a deep blood red, and white, clear intense white, and at last white-gold, like the Glory of God Himself. And it was dancing, dancing up and down, stepping it from peak to peak, from hilltop to hilltop.

The price of this mystic vision, as with that extracted from those who see the enchanted secrets of Fairyland, is blindness.

From thic we are impelled towards the Fatima story. (4,6, 7,8,9,10,11) Here three peasant children encountered, in the Cova da Iria, a large creek, a celestial woman. It was the 13th of May 1917 when, tending sheep, they saw a bright flash of light. Then near an oak tree a woman materialised in a globe of fire. According to the children: "The wonderful lady looked young. Her dress was as

white as snow and, tied to her neck with a gold band, wholly covered her body. A white cloak with a golden edge covered her head. Near her hands was a rosary of pearly grains. The face was circled by a golden halo." (3) The lady delivered a message, then departed in the luminous globe. Again on the 13th of June, 13th July and 13th September the lady reappeared to the children. By the 13th September a good crowd had gathered, but only the children saw the lady. Some (but by no means all) saw an 'aeroplane of light' coming from and returning to the sun in the east, with strange flakes which dissolved when touched, dropped from the sky. The following month, the cumulation of this fantastic vision, came the famous Dance of the Sun. At midday through the clouds came the sun, glowing with a clear brilliance. Suddenly it seemed to spin wildly, and as it did so it changed colour, yellow, green, blue, then deep blood-red, falling towards the earth, the temperature rising. Then suddenly the spell was broken, the sun was back in a cloudless sky. While this spectacle was taking place the lady again appeared to the children, giving them messages they had to deliver to the great ones of the world. Only the children saw the lady; not all the crowd even saw the dance of the sun. (10) Something which those who attribute the phenomena to electromagnetic spaceships have failed to account for. About this event Michell writes:

There is a sort of fairy-tale atmosphere about the whole story. The lady appears to have been one of those supernatural figures like the attendant of the Holy Grail who can appear to one person, and be invisible to another. She revealed herself above or by a tree like the angels who visited Joan of Arc or like the legendary local goddesses of pre-Christian Portugal. (4)

It is well to bear these views in mind, for such visions occur outside the traditional religious setting. Two centuries before Fatima a strange rumour circulated in the France of Louis XIV. It concerned a wonderful apparition perceived by a Marechal Ferraut (12,13). Riding home one evening through a dark forest in Provence, he passed a blasted oak. There he saw a strange light.

Between this tree and a sapling, the intervening space consisting of about a dozen yards, stood a tall figure absolutely still and apparently inanimate. It seemed at first to be shaped out of transparent cloud... However, rapidly becoming more and more substantial, it soon developed into a very beautiful woman. She was dressed in white, the most splendid jewels glittered on her arms and breast, and something like a tiara upon her lovely golden hair... (12)

A strange paralysis, such as that which affects UFO percipients, gripped him. The strange figure announced that it was the spirit of the King's late wife. It commanded him to take a message to the King. This consisted in part of a message about an apparition the King himself had seen in the same forest, thirty years before. He promised to deliver the message, under the most terrible threats. Yet Ferrault had greater fear of the King, and he was to encounter the apparition twice again before he carried out the mission. The King, it was said, paid him highly to keep his silence as to the full nature of the message.

The reader will already have seen the parallels with Fatima and other 'visions of Mary' — the tree, the woman of awesome beauty, the secret message to the leaders. The differences too — the vision of the children is one of quiet beauty, that of the old warrior awesome, and possessed of a terrible power.

Midway in time between these two stories, there occurred in a Maine coast village near Machiasport a strange vision which seems to create a link between the legends such as Fatima and those of modern psychical research. (14,15) Towards the end of August 1799 a strange voice was heard in the house of a sea captain, Paul Blaisdel, followed a few months later (in January 1800) by an apparition of a beautiful woman clad in brilliant white raiment, who

floated, just above the ground, claiming to be a Mrs George Eutler (deceased) and summoned her 'husband' and 'father' to prove the point. The purpose of the visitations was to force George Butler to marry the captain's daughter Lydia, a purpose which was eventually accomplished.

The descriptions of what happened during the period are incredible. The apparition herded large numbers of people into the Blaisdel's cellar (On one occasion there were more than two hundred present.) and delivered sermons, interspersed with prophecies, all of which eventually came to pass. There is a description of one of these lectures. The writer, a young woman guest, was awoken by knocks on the door and went to the cellar, where twenty people were already assembled: "Then I heard a voice speaking... it was shrill, but mild and pleasant." Then there appeared a shapeless mass of light, growing into the figure of a woman, which then passed between the ranks of the spectators, talking all the time. At last it became shapeless, "expanded everywhere" and then vanished in a moment. The . Rev. Abraham Cummings, who published the case, (14) had an even more curious experience. Told of the apparition he was sceptical and went to see for himself:

About twelve rods ahead of him there was a slight knoll or rise in the ground, and he could see a group of white rocks on the slope, showing dimly against the dark turf... Two or three minutes later he looked up... One of those white rocks had risen off the ground, and had now taken the shape of a globe of light with a rosy tinge. As he went towards it he kept his eye on it for fear it might disappear, but he had not gone more than five paces when the glowing mass flashed right to where he was (and) resolved itself into the shape and dress of a woman, but small, the size of a child of seven. He thought: "You are not tall enough for the woman who has been appearing among us." Immediately the figure expanded to normal size... and now she appeared glorious, with rays of light shining from her head all about, and reaching to the ground. (15)

Struck dumb by joy mingled with terror Cummings stood silent, the figure then faded. The world seemed dull, commonplace, compared to its glory, he later recorded.

The inhabitants of Magonia can change their shape at will: "They are shape changers, they can grow small or grow large; they can take what shape they may choose." (16) There are parallels to these stories. No. 16, The Waterdales, Northfleet, Kent, for example, where, in a bedroom, the ghostly figure of a small girl growing to the size of a woman was seen. (17) Again there is Warminster, a maelstrom of embryo mythologies, where a member of Shuttlewood's investigating team was 'taken(by tiny beings who grew to normal size, then reduced him, with themselves. (18) (The Sidhe take people body and soul thus transforming them into one of their own.) They returned him, but he was never the same again, and began to waste away. In other days it would have been said he was a 'changeling', for the Sidhe never give up those they have taken.

Those who are taken go to Magonia itself, the enchanted world, located according to various cultures under the earth, or sea, in the sky, or on strange other worlds. Always it is the Shangri-La, just over the horizon, so near and yet so far. Few will go willingly into this paradise, for once entered there is no return. So 'they' will take men by force, especially those who have offended against their code, or who have disturbed their secret places. One such tale of attempted kidnapping is told by Elliot O'Donnell, the well-known ghost hunter. (19) A relative of O'Donnell (mr B.) was driving in his side-car one night along a road from Hospital to Ballynanty in Limerick, a route notorious as a haunt of the Sidhe. He had failed drowsy when he was suddenly awakened by his driver-servant clutching hold of him:

The horse had come to a dead stop, and was standing still, shivering, whilst the readside was crowded with a number of tiny shadowy figures that were surging round the car trying to drag the unfortunate driver, who was quite frantic with terror, from his seat. Mr B. however, concluding that what he saw could only be the fairies... of whose existence he had hitherto been very sceptical, seized the reins and urged the horse forward. Meanwhile his servant seemed to be still paralysed with fright, and it was not until they were well out of sight that the man found himself once again in possession of his tongue and normal faculties... Then he described what had befallen him ... He waw driving along quite all right, till the horse suddenly stopped, and when he looked down to see what was the cause of it, he perceived a crowd of fairies, who rushed at him, and tried to drag him off the car. He said their touch was so cold it benumbed him. But by praying hard he held on. The cause of the attack was apparent.

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"It was all because we came on them, sorr, when they were dancing. They won't be disturbed when they are at their revels and enjoying themselves. Had they got me down into the road, maybe I should have lost my sight or my hearing or the use of my limbs, and in any case my soul." (19)

Had such a story been told today there would be no doubt that it would be interpreted as a ufonaut kidnapping attempt. It is equally true of course that in earlier times the adventure of Gustafsson and Rydberg for example (20) would have been seen as an attempt by the trolls or watermen to take humans to their underground home.

It is clear that the supposedly simple UFO phenomenon is in fact incalculably complex. Whatever pretty little theory we care to dream up never covers the whole spectrum of events. Pieces of the jigsaw do fall into place; it is evident, for example, that the modern UFO legend is an integral part of an immensely old mythological tradition, some facets of which we have presented here. We may in fact regard the UFO as an archetypical symbol derived from the sun, at one level of 'reality'. However this certainly is not the whole meaning behind the myth or the reality. Can we interpret the phenomenon as subjective? If so, can the human subconscious create such a complex hallucination, or would it have to be implanted by some extra-mundane intelligence, and what kind of mind could accomplish that, and for what purpose? If the phenomenon is objective even more questions seem to be raised, among the simplest being: how could any objective phenomenon be visible to only a limited number of people contiguous to one another. Certainly if the phenomenon is a result of the activities of an extra-mundane intelligence it is operating at a far more complex and subtle level than most exponents of the ETH are prepared to concede.

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THE AIMS AND METHODS OF OGEA

by David H. Westhead

The Co-ordinator of a new UFO group—Observation Group on Extraterrestrials' Activities -- describes its aims. His address is: 111 Corporation Street. St Helens, Lancashire.

Observation Group on Extraterrestrials' Activities exists primarily to study MIB. It would appear from the name that it is a foregone conclusion that MIB are "Xenoids" (to coin a word), but this apparent belief of the Group is based on a totally negative principle, and stems from a saying by Francis Bacon in "Novum Organum": 'Truth emerges more readily from error than from confusion'. That is we choose a hypothesis, but if it is found to be contrary to the evidence, then we reject it. So we say MIB are Xenoids, but if we find that the evidence tends to some other appropriately idea. The proposition of the proposition. conclusion then we reject our original idea. As, at present, UFOs and related phenomena can only be studied by statistical means, then statistical methods must be applied.

Now, if MIB have an extraterrestrial origin, then there must exist means by which they can be deposited on the Earth and, assuming that they do not remain as permanent residents here, means of removing them from the Earth. It is at this stage where the secondary, but extremely important, interest of OGEA is introduced. This is the investigation of reports of UFOs landing on the Earth, and of creatures emerging from the craft. While it can quite easily be argued that all UFOs which are seen flying low over the ground, and the landings of which are not seen, are potential candidates for depositing Earth-bound operatives, circumstantial evidence of this kind is just as likely to lead an circumstantial evidence of this kind is just as likely to lead an investigator away from the truth as towards it. Hence, only reports of definite sightings of creatures emerging from craft are of statistical significance. Having said this, one must then remember that none of the cceatures actually sighted can be eliminated merely on grounds of dissimilarity to humans, for the evidence of their vehicles suggests that their technology is advanced far enough to make life-like robot androids; and if the historical reports are correct UFOs have had several hundred years in which to compile a full report on the human form.

Even granted that any of the creatures could be responsible for MIB, the humanoids arec still of chief interest, for, assuming that these beings have any part of their personality the same as us then, they will always want to send one of their own rather than a machine to do the job. It seems a rather wild assumption to make, that these creatures have any part of their complex motivations similar to ours, but if one stops to consider that these beings have come to the Earth themselves and not sent survey machines (assuming that the creatures seen emerging from UFOs are not all

robot androids) then there is a part of their mental make-up which is like ours.

So, to summarize the methods, OGEA is designed to analyse reports of MIB, and creatures landing on the Earth, with particular attention given to Humanoids. Where is all this analysis intended to lead OGEA? The aims of OGEA are (if possible):
(a) to determine the origin of MIB

(b) to determine the purpose of MIB

(c) if the origin is found to be extraterrestrial, then to

find out what is special about the UFO sightings that people are persuaded to forget.

QUERIES NOTES QUOTES &

Ball lightning controversy continues

We are grateful to Mr Peter Booth (see "Letters to the Editor") for sending us a copy of recent correspondence in Nature (230, 576-7) concerning ball lightning. Three letters appeared in this issue in reply to a letter by E. Argyle who argued that ball lightning is merely an optical illusion. All three writers disagreed with this argument. R.C. Jennison, of the Electronics Laboratory, University of Kent, mentions his sighting of a lightning ball Which appeared inside an aircraft on which he was travelling. He had already described this incident in a previous issue of Nature (224, 895).

W.N. Charman, of the Opthalmic Optics Department, University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology argues that descriptions of ball lightning are inconsistent with the effects produced by the after images of bright lights. He also notes that Argyle rejects physical evidence and descriptions inconsistent with ... the optical illusions theory as "unreliable".

The harshest criticism comes from P.C.W. Davies of the Institute of Theoretical Astronomy, Cambridge. Dealing with Argyle's approach to the problem he writes:

"The philosophy of this approach seems to be that if a naturally occurring phenomenon is hard to account for conventionally (i) decide that it has no physical reality; (ii) construct a physiological or psychological explanation; (iii) ignore the physical evidence that contradicts this explanation.

"All this bears a striking resemblance to the mistreatment of that other perennial and highly disreputable subject of unidentified flying objects, to which the above philosophy has been consistently applied for 25 yr. The final irony is that a section of the Condon report on unidentified flying objects is devoted to an explanation of these phenomena in terms of ball lightning, by Altschuler."

Neasden UFO Hoax?

A photograph in the latest UFO News (*) purporting to show a UFO over alleged "Rimmer Road, Neasden" is being analysed in our caption laboratories by leading Neasden-researcher John Ritmer. Initial studies cast grave doubts over its authenticity. Spectral analysis of Kelly's London Directory, Bartholemew's Street Atlas, Al Guide to London and London A-Z, have failed to substantiate the existence, in any physical sense, of "Ritmer Road, Neasden". The possibility of an hallucination caused by the rarefied atmosphere around Brent Town Hall is being investigated. The most disturbing aspect of this case is the possibility that it is merely a crude hoax. Serious Neasden research is constantly bedevilled by these hoaxes, and coming at a time when even conservative scientists and cartographers are prepared to accept the possibility of the reality of Neasdan, it could prove disastrous. However, should the caption be proved genuine, this might be the breakthrough that Neasdenologists have been awaiting for centuries.

Next issue: Dollis Hill and the Great Pyramid of Cheops -- amazing scenes.

(*) UFO News, No.4, June 1971, Editor: David Prockter, 1 St Augustine's Court, Mornington Road, Leytonstone, London Ell 3BQ

Practical ufology for gendarmes

According to the Daily Telegraph (May 10, 1971):-

"Somewhat unusual advice is tendered to members of France's Gendarmerie Nationale in its magazine. An article urges gendarmes to keep a sharp eye open for evidence of landings by flying saucers or other engines from outer space. Should they find traces of such landings they should make careful notes of the circumstances, and secure any debris left behind. They should also examine insects in the vicinity for signs of anomalies and measure the degree of radioactivity present. Wherever possible photographs should be taken. Infrared photographs would be particularly valuable. One may suspect that these recommendations are a hoax perpetrated on the poor gendarmes by a colleague with a taste for practical jokes. But there is nothing (to indicate this) in the magazine."

Paranoia

Item in the Liverpool Daily Post (May 28, 1971):-

"Police are used to strange calls in the middle of the night, but the one received at a Birkenhead station this week was stranger than most. It was 2 a.m. and the call came from a woman calling herself 'Cynthia'.

"Did the police know, she asked, that Soviet aircraft were dropping ashes over Birkenhead Park at 6,000 feet? No, they don't. Could the police, she suggested, pick up the aircraft on their radar?

"'I am afraid, madam,' came the quick answer from a cool officer, that our radar only works on roads.'"

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